

Fritz Lang, Master Director, Dies at 85

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Director Fritz Lang, one of the screen's grand masters and the last survivor of the Golden Age of the German cinema, died today in his home in Beverly Hills. He was 85.

Classics became the norm for Lang during his 45-year career. He was responsible for such greats as "Man Hunt," "The Woman in the Window," "Scarlet Street," "Rancho Notorious," "The Big Heat," "Human Desire" and "While the City Sleeps."

His list of impressive European films includes "Die Nibelungen", "Metropolis" and "M".

Born the son of an architect in Vienna, Lang studied his father's profession, but later turned to painting and eventually screenwriting. He directed his first film in 1919 and soon became associated with UFA's Erich Pommer.

When Hitler wanted Lang to take over the leadership of the Nazi film industry in 1933, Lang refused and immediately fled to France where he made "Liliom" with Charles Boyer.

In 1934 David O. Selznick brought Lang to Hollywood.

In Hollywood, the director never enjoyed the kind of backing he was used to in Europe. Yet he maintained his style and integrity in a series of memorable American films beginning in 1936 with "Fury," starring Spencer Tracy.



Fritz Lang in 1970

Times photo

In recent years, Lang received several honors. After being away from his native city for more than 45 years, Lang returned in 1972 to re-

ceive the Golden Medal of the City of Vienna, the city's highest honor.

Since then he has been honored by the Yugoslavian and Italian governments and was honored last year at the Munich Museum which held a 40-film Lang retrospective.

"Sometimes I wonder what kind of films I would make today if I were able," said Lang last year in his Beverly Hills home.

"With the world the way it is, I think they would be very critical—very aggressive. I would want to show how television has robbed the young people of their imagination. But that would only be a small part of all I would have to say."

Private services are pending.